

Doctor Treebody Script

Hi!

I'm Dr. Treebody, and I've got a story to tell you about why Arkansas's forests are important. How important are they? Glad you asked. Why, they are so important that without them we wouldn't have habitat for wildlife, lumber for our homes, cool places to hike, or jobs for many people. They produce the oxygen we breathe and, oh yeah, did I mention toilet paper?

I've just spent the last year traveling through your forests. You see, that's what I do. I work for the Forest Importance Institute. The Institute studies the forests of the world, documents why they are important, and helps citizens understand how lucky they are to have forests.

Your teacher invited me to share a new virtual reality technology with you so you can see the cool things that Arkansas's forests do for you. The machine is called the Brainwave 4000. How the "4000" works is that you have to close your eyes and listen to words that are read. As you listen, I would like you to turn on the Brainwave 4000 in your head. The backs of your eyelids are like a big stereo movie screen. As I talk to you, you will see the pictures you already have in your head. Sounds funny, but your head is full of pictures. Pictures you've seen in magazines, on television, or from real life experiences. So put a new battery in, turn on your Brainwave 4000, and sit back and watch the show.

All right, got your "Brainwaves" on? Here we go.

Climb up here with me and stand on these big rocks on this cliff. Look at that big valley. Hey, be careful. Don't lean too far over; you just might fall off. Look at the tops of those trees. They seem to go on forever. Did you see that large hawk land on that tree? Let's walk down into the woods. If you blink your right eye twice, the Brainwave 4000 will take us directly into the forest.

Did everyone blink your right eye twice?

We're in an Arkansas forest. Look at the trees – oaks, maples, and pines. Anyone see more than trees? I've seen white-tail deer, black bears, and wild turkeys here before, and small animals like chipmunks, chickadees, and blue spotted salamanders. This forest is great wildlife habitat. It provides everything they need to live.



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Hey, did you know that forests provide things we need to live too? Take a look at this tree leaf I have in my hand. This leaf is a factory. No, it doesn't make cars or light bulbs, but it makes something we need even more. As the sun shines on the leaf, a process inside the leaf called photosynthesis takes place. The leaf takes in carbon dioxide, which is a gas all animals breathe out, and gives off oxygen, which is a gas we all need to live.

Everyone take a deep breath. Wow, that was made by a tree.

The leaves on this tree do other things too. Feel how cool it is under this tree compared to out there in the sun. The shade of this tree is like an air conditioner. Oh, it's starting to rain. We seem to be under a big umbrella. It is raining hard now. The leaves slow down the rain and the water drips off the leaves. It lands on last year's leaves on the ground under the tree. Amazing how hard it is raining and yet this year's leaves and last year's help keep the rain from washing away the soil under the tree.

Seems this forest does a lot to help our environment. This is pretty important stuff, don't you think? But that's just part of the reason forests are important. Not only are they important to the environment, they also are important to our economy.

I know that's a big word you might not know. Let's look at forests and how they relate to the economy. Pull on your left ear to reset the Brainwave 4000 and watch closely. I bet you'll figure out what we mean by economy.

Did you pull your left ear?

Hey, how many of you use products that come from forests? There are about 5,000 things that come from trees alone. We don't have time to look at all of these, but let's look at a few. The first thing that probably comes to mind is lumber. How many of you live in a house or apartment? Blink your right eye three times and the Brainwave 4000 should take you to your home. What is it built from? Although you may not be able to see it on the outside, lumber is a key part of your house – from the walls and doors to the roof.

Lumber is just one thing that comes from forests, we only have 4,999 more to go. Let's go in your bathroom. Sure, you've got toilet paper, but that's not all. Let's take a peek in your medicine cabinet. I see four things made from forests right here. Do you see them? You've got mouthwash, toothpaste, shampoo, and shaving cream. These items are made from the sap of trees or from fibers found in the cell walls of trees.

I'm kind of hungry. Let's check out your kitchen. Look in your freezer. There's a box of double fudge nut ice cream. I love ice cream and, believe it or not, ice cream too, has fibers from the cell walls of trees. You've got apples, pears, peaches, and plums – these all come from trees. Hey, mind if I snoop a little more in your cupboards?

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Wow, look here – napkins, paper plates, and a cutting board. These are all made from trees right here in Arkansas. Do you get the picture, or do I need to show you the other 4,985 things? Looks like Arkansas's forests are really important for products. Making those products means jobs.

Speaking of jobs, does anyone have family that works in the forest products industry? Wiggle your nose three times and the Brainwave 4000 will reset. See those people working in the forest products industry? Over there is a logger who harvests the trees. That trucker hauls them to the sawmill. Blink your right eye two times. Wow, that lumber from the sawmill is being unloaded into a factory that makes windows, furniture, toothpicks, or the stuff we found in your kitchen. Stick out your tongue and move it up and down.

Oh, I forgot something else cool about forests. Touch your left elbow to your right knee. That sets the Brainwave 4000 to vacation time. Anyone ever go on vacation in Arkansas? Look over there; people are camping, fishing, canoeing, and hiking, and it is all taking place in the forest. Forests help what we call tourism. Tourism is the industry related to people taking vacations in our state. Isn't it beautiful and relaxing here in this forest? If you spend much time here you just might end up mountain biking, snowmobiling, riding all-terrain vehicles, hunting, or bird watching.

I don't know about you, but I think forests in Arkansas are pretty darn important. I've been all over the world, and not every state and country has forests that provide all the things Arkansas's forests do. Next time someone asks you about forests, have them turn on their Brainwave 4000 and show them how important forests are. Well, got to go. Put your left hand on top your head and open your eyes. Your Brainwave 4000 is now shut off.